GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3687
ANSWERED ON:22.12.2015
Falling of Trees for Highways and Metro Train Projects
Patel Shri Natubhai Gomanbhai

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of trees had been felled for construction of highways and metro rail across the country during the last three years;
(b) if so, the details thereof; and
(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a)to (c)The Central Governmenthas accorded approvals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 during the year of 2012over 2,663 ha of forest land in 196 cases, in 2013 over 3,260 ha in 194 cases, in 2014 over 2,932 ha in 156 cases and in 2015 over 2,794 ha in 380 cases for construction of highways and metro rail across the country. Such construction activities involve felling of trees and detail regarding number of project affected trees is worked out by the concerned State/UT Governments. Felling of trees during the construction of project is allowed under the strict supervision of the State Forest Department. However, as per the provisions of the Guidelines issued by the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in lieu of forest area approved for such construction activities and project affected trees thereof, the user agency is required to raise compensatory afforestation, as the case may be, either over equivalent non-forest land or degraded forest land, double in extent to the forest approved under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. In general, private project proponents give equivalent non-forest land and it is transferred and mutated as forest land. During the last two years and current year an area of about 84,542 ha has been prescribed for compensatory afforestation as part of environmental safeguards. The NHAI has taken up a programme of planting of rows of trees alongside the Highways. It has reserved 1% project Cost (Rs.5000 Crores) for next few years for this purpose.
****